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Jerry Geisel

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## COBRA champion Henry Waxman to retire from House at year's end

January 30, 2014 - 2:49pm



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Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., the co-author of the original COBRA health care legislation, announced Thursday that he will not seek re-election and will retire at the end of the year.



Bloomberg

Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif.

"In 1974, I announced my first campaign for Congress. Today, I am announcing that I have run my last campaign. I will not seek reelection to Congress and will leave after 40 years in office at the end of this year," he said in a statement.

In the employee benefits realm, Rep.

Waxman, 74, was best known as the lawmaker who in the mid-1980s — along with former Rep. Pete Stark, D-Calif. — introduced legislation to require employers to extend group health care coverage to employees after they terminated employment and to their dependents in death, divorce and marital separation situations.

That free-standing bill later was attached to the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, a broader bill that lawmakers approved in 1986. Since its passage, COBRA has enabled millions of employees and their dependents to retain coverage by paying a premium equal to 102% of the group rate.

Mr. Waxman later introduced measures that expanded the Medicaid program and, as chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, helped steer the 2010 health care reform law through his committee.

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